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**COMMUNITY-BASED FORESTRY AND PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT (CBFM) PROJECT**  
**NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT**  
**REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

<b>Programme Title &amp; Project Number</b>  <b>Programme Title:</b> Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM)  <b>Programme Number:</b> 00133363  MPTF Office Project Reference Number: <sup>2</sup> <b>00133701</b>	<b>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results<sup>1</sup></b>  The CBFM Project is implemented in 7 counties: (Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Lofa, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, and River Cess) within the North-West and South-East Landscapes of Liberia.  <b>Priority Area/ Strategic Results</b>  <b>UNSDCF Output 2.2: By 2024</b> , National and subnational capacity to deliver sustainable natural resource management and climate-aware initiatives is strengthened. <b>UNDP CPD OUTCOME 3:1</b> By 2024, Liberia has diversified an inclusive economic growth underpinned by investments in sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture, food security, job creation and improved resilience to climate change and natural disasters.
<b>Participating Organization(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• United Nations Development Programme</li><li>• United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization</li></ul>	<b>Implementing Partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Forestry Development Authority (FDA)</li></ul>
<b>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</b> <b>US\$7,821,696.34</b>  <b>Total approved budget as per project document:</b> MPTF /JP Contribution <sup>3</sup> : by Agency <b>UNDP:</b> US\$3,893,394.8 <b>FAO:</b> US\$3,928,301.48	<b>Programme Duration</b>  <b>Overall Duration</b> (48 Months)  <b>Start Date<sup>4</sup></b> 31/10/2022  <b>End Date<sup>5</sup></b> 25/05/2026

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

<sup>2</sup> The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>3</sup> The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>4</sup> The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

<sup>5</sup> As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

**Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.**

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*

☐ Yes ☐ No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report – *if applicable please attach*

☐ Yes ☐ No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

**Report Submitted By**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AFC</b>	: Authorized Forest Community
<b>CBFM</b>	: Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management
<b>CDA</b>	: Cooperative Development Agency of Liberia
<b>CF</b>	: Community Forest
<b>CSO</b>	: Civil Society Organization
<b>FAO</b>	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FDA</b>	: Forestry Development Authority
<b>FCI</b>	: Foundation for Community Initiative
<b>IPs</b>	: Implementing Partners
<b>IWL</b>	: Integrity Watch of Liberia
<b>LCC</b>	: Liberia Cocoa Corporation
<b>MPTF</b>	: Multi Partner Trust Fund Office
<b>NGO</b>	: Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PAs</b>	: Protected Areas
<b>PADEV</b>	: Partners in Development
<b>PPAs</b>	: Proposed Protected Areas
<b>SDI</b>	: Sustainable Development Institute
<b>SCNL</b>	: Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia
<b>TNC</b>	: The Nature Compact
<b>UNSDCF</b>	: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	: United Nations Development Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area Management (CBFM) Project, a four-year joint initiative by UNDP and UNFAO in partnership with Liberia's Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and in consultation with key government ministries and agencies, is advancing sustainable forestry and community empowerment across Liberia. This third annual progress report (January 1 to December 31, 2024) highlights significant achievements in both forest conservation and the socio-economic well-being of rural communities where economic opportunities are limited.

Through collaborations with eight key implementing partners (SCNL, PADEV, IWL, CDA, TNC, FCI, SDI, iCampus-Liberia) and leveraging national and international expertise, the CBFM project has strengthened the capacity of over 10,000 community forest members and Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs) in 18 clustered forest communities, including Authorized Forest Communities (AFCs), Protected and Proposed Protected Areas, and forest-fringe communities. This support has focused on improved forest governance and community-based forestry management, including increasing women's participation in decision-making structures.

Key progress includes the establishment of community-based structures in three AFCs, the review of Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs) covering 71,995 hectares, and the advancement of seven applicant forest communities (70,024 ha) to advanced stages (between steps 5 and 8) of the authorization process. Furthermore, 1,169 individuals (42% female) improved their skills in areas such as advocacy, gender mainstreaming, Community Rights Law, land rights, leadership, biodiversity conservation, and participatory mapping.

The project has also demonstrably improved livelihoods for over 1,500 direct beneficiaries (65% women) through the successful implementation of ventures including lowland rice farming, animal husbandry, beekeeping, cassava processing, groundnut and vegetable cultivation, arts and crafts, and participation in village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). Additionally, the distribution and planting of 149,000 cocoa seedlings to 250 farmers (40% women) in three forest communities promises significant future income generation within the next three years. Overall, the CBFM project is making tangible contributions to both environmental sustainability and economic resilience in Liberia's forest-dependent communities.

### I. Purpose

The project seeks to strengthen the management of community forests and protected areas in Liberia through improved governance of community forest and management bodies, capacity building of forest regulatory institutions, empowerment of national CSOs/NGOs and Forest and Farm Producer Organizations, integrated natural resources management (INRM) and the promotion of sustainable livelihood incentives for forest fringe communities.

Aligned with the Strategic UN Planning Framework (UNSDCF Outcome 2), the project supports sustainable economic development, including diversified and inclusive economic growth, sustainable agriculture, food security, job creation, resilience to climate change, increased agricultural productivity, and improved forest utilization through competitive value chains and market linkages. The project is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Strengthened institutional and community capacity and a robust regulatory framework for community forest management.
- Improved habitat and status of key species through participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation approaches.
- Enhanced sustainable livelihood options for forest fringe communities, reducing dependence on forests and increasing climate resilience.

- The establishment and strengthening of a knowledge management system to support gender-balanced community forest management and the co-management of protected areas.

The project's goal is to balance forest conservation with economic development by: developing sustainable alternative livelihoods to reduce dependence on forest resources, strengthening community forest management (CFM) governance and institutional capacity, enhancing biodiversity data and improving forest management planning, promoting inclusive, sustainable business development for forest and farm producers (with a focus on non-timber forest products, or NTFPs, and local value chains), and integrating gender equity while involving local communities in the decision-making process.

## **II. Progress Towards Development Results**

### **Outcome 1: Strengthened institutional and community capacity and regulatory framework for community forest management**

*Outcome Indicator 1.1a: Number of communities with strengthened capacities and regulatory frameworks in place for Community Forest Management*

**Baseline:** 0

**Planned Target:** 20 Communities

**Results Achieved:** 18 Communities (90% of target achieved)

**Narrative:** The project has successfully strengthened the capacities and regulatory frameworks for community forest management in 18 out of the 20 targeted forest communities. These communities, encompassing multiple towns, have benefited from various capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing forest governance and supporting community-based forest management. The targeted communities include Authorized Forest Communities (AFCs), forest-fringe communities and those neighbouring Protected Areas/Proposed Protected Areas, all demonstrating improved abilities to manage forest resources sustainably. Notably, community-based structures have been established, and Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs) have been reviewed in three AFCs. Furthermore, the targeted seven cluster forests have advanced to steps 5 and 8 in the 9-step process for establishing authorized community forests.

This progress indicates substantial advancement in empowering communities in forest governance and management, significantly contributing to the project's overall success.

*Outcome Indicator 1.1b: Number of regulatory framework documents updated/simplified and in use by forest communities' beneficiaries*

**Baseline:** 0

**Target:** 3

**Results Achieved:** 4 Documents (133% of target achieved)

**Narrative:** The project has exceeded its target by successfully simplifying four key regulatory framework documents to enhance accessibility for forest community beneficiaries. These documents, now in use by the communities, include the Community Rights Law, Conservation and Wildlife Management Law, National Forest Reform Law, and Land Rights Act. The simplification process ensured alignment with the literacy levels of community forest members, enabling better understanding and implementation of forest management and conservation regulations. This achievement has empowered communities with the necessary legal frameworks to support sustainable forest practices and facilitate more effective participation in forest governance and management.

### **Outcome 2: Status of key species and their habitat improved due to participatory forest management and biodiversity conservation**

*Outcome Indicator 2.1: Percentage increase in biodiversity conserved in Protected Areas*

**Baseline:** 0

**Target:** 20%

**Results Achieved: Species Data Pending**

**Narrative:** The percentage increase in biodiversity (species) conserved in Protected Areas is currently undetermined due to the absence of specific species data. However, the project team is actively collaborating with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) to calculate this percentage. This will involve utilizing specific studies or reports focusing on regions or species within the project areas. While the precise biodiversity improvement is pending, significant efforts are underway to ensure accurate measurement and reporting of this outcome in the near future.

About 240,000ha have come under improved management because of the demarcation of community forests through the nine step process and regular patrols conducted in protected and proposed protected areas by the Eco-guards and FDA rangers. This has increased the habitat quality as communities are participating in guarding against illegal activities and the Eco-guards are proactively sensitizing their mother communities against poaching.

To further address deforestation and improve the quality of protected areas, two sites to be reforested have been identified. One service provider has been selected to upgrade two nursery sites that will supply planting stock for this intervention and work will begin in April 2025 while FAO made a call for vendors to supply necessary materials.

**Outcome 3: Livelihood options for communities are made climate-resilient through diversification, entrepreneurship, sustainable land management framework (SLFM), and climate smart agriculture (CSA)**

*Outcome Indicator 3.1a: Number of climate-resilient livelihoods initiatives implemented in targeted forest communities*

**Baseline:** 0

**Target:** 10 (At least 1 per forest community engaged)

**Results Achieved: 6 Initiatives Implemented in 14 Communities (60% of target achieved)**

**Narrative:** The project has made notable progress in promoting climate-resilient livelihood initiatives. To date, six climate-smart agriculture (CSA) initiatives have been initiated and are being implemented across 14 forest communities. These ongoing initiatives include Cocoa/Plantain/Pigeon Pea intercropping, Lowland SRI Rice farming, Cassava Value Chain development, Vegetable cultivation, and Beekeeping. While there have been some delays in implementing additional livelihood activities, significant steps have been taken to ensure future progress. For instance, through the UNDP Growth Accelerator Approach, 30 Community-Based Forest Enterprises were selected and have received training in various business models and with small grant support, they will commence implementing their sustainable businesses by end of April 2025. Furthermore, 10 agriculture demonstration sites have been established to support communities raise planting stock (which was seen as a constraint to production) and have raised income among the communities.

The Integrated Livelihood activities (which are not yet fully rolled out) have gained some encouraging traction, including securing about 5 ha on which to implement small livestock, poultry and vegetable production. The project anticipates an increase in climate-smart agriculture activities in these communities by Quarter 2 of 2025, contributing significantly towards meeting the target.

*Outcome Indicator 3.1b: Number of people with increased income through sustainable alternative livelihood activities*

**Baseline:** 0

**Target:** At least 3,000 people

**Results Achieved: 1,500 Household Heads (50% of target achieved)**

**Narrative:** To date, 1,500 household heads have experienced increased income through a variety of sustainable alternative livelihood activities. These include lowland SRI rice farming, participation in Village

Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), engagement in Art and Craft production, Beekeeping, Vegetable cultivation, and Cowpea farming. This progress demonstrates a positive impact on the economic well-being of participating community members. Ongoing efforts, including the training of Community-Based Forest Enterprises and the establishment of agriculture demonstration sites, are expected to contribute significantly to reaching the target of engaging 3,000 people in climate-resilient livelihoods. For example, by time of reporting, the eleven VSLAs had generated interest of about USD5,000; vegetable production had generated USD1,000 and crafts had generated USD500. Rolling out the integrated livelihood initiatives will ramp up this target.

**Outcome 4: Knowledge Management system built/strengthened to support gender-balanced CFM & co-management of PAs by communities**

*Outcome Indicator 4.1.1: Number of people or beneficiaries practicing in sustainable forest management*

**Baseline:** 0

**Target:** At least 60% of targeted beneficiaries in forest communities

**Results Achieved: Over 3,000 Beneficiaries Practicing Sustainable Forest Management**

**Narrative:** The project has achieved significant progress in promoting sustainable forest management practices, with over 3,000 beneficiaries currently implementing these practices across the targeted forest communities. This success is attributed to the collaborative efforts of various partners, including SCNL, PADEV, SDI, FCI, TNC, and CDA. These partners have directly engaged with beneficiaries through workshops, awareness sessions, training programs, and the distribution of educational materials such as flyers, posters, fact sheets, and multimedia content. These initiatives have reached over 6,000 people in the targeted forest communities, ensuring the mainstreaming of gender with equal engagement of men and women in Community Forest Management (CFM) activities. With ongoing efforts expected to reach more beneficiaries in 2025, the project is on track to meet the target of engaging at least 60% of beneficiaries in sustainable forest management, emphasizing gender inclusivity and community-driven management of forest resources.

**Qualitative Assessment of Project Achievement**

The programme has achieved **substantial progress** towards its objectives, demonstrating notable advancements in forest governance, community forest management, livelihood diversification, and biodiversity conservation. While some challenges are being actively addressed, the overall trajectory indicates significant success.

Strong partnerships with local leaders and organizations have **facilitated effective outreach** in remote areas, ensuring active involvement of even the most isolated communities in forest management practices. This collaborative approach has also **effectively integrated gender perspectives** into forest governance, with both men and women actively participating in decision-making.

Testimonies from communities underscore the programme's tangible impact. In the Yandohun community, the System for Rice Intensification has brought significant improvements in food security. Mr. Wallace Boikai, chairman of the rice group, shared, "We are happy because we got food from the garden starting August 2024, which we shared with the entire community" highlighting the direct benefits experienced by beneficiaries.

**Cross-Cutting Issues:**

Gender inclusivity and climate change adaptation have been pivotal to the achievements. The programme has effectively mainstreamed gender into community forest management (CFM), ensuring equitable representation of men and women in decision-making.

Recognizing the potential of technology and innovation within the forestry sector, the project supported the development of **Talkay Forestry**, a digital platform dedicated to reporting instances of corruption. This tool provides a mechanism for citizens to anonymously submit allegations and upload supporting evidence, thereby enhancing community capacity for forestry governance. The Talkay Forestry application is available for download on both the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store.

### **UN Coordination and Support:**

Within the joint programming framework, UN coordination has been pivotal in aligning the programme's objectives with broader national and regional sustainable development and forest conservation strategies. The collaboration between UNDP and UNFAO has fostered knowledge exchange, technical expertise sharing, and resource pooling, amplifying the programme's overall impact. UN support has also been instrumental in mitigating challenges such as funding delays and operational bottlenecks.

Regular joint coordination meetings, field missions including with the donor and updates have contributed to real-time collective problem-solving, hence overcoming implementation hurdles.



### Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

Indicators	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<b>Outcome 1<sup>6</sup></b> <b>Indicator 1.1a: Number of communities with strengthened capacities and regulatory framework in place for Community Forest Management)</b> <b>Baseline:0</b> <b>Planned Target:20 Communities</b>	<b>Forest governance:</b> 90% of this result has been achieved, with 18 out of the 20 forest communities comprising several towns benefiting from various levels of capacity building for Authorized Forest Communities (AFCs), Protected and Proposed Protected Areas, and forest-fringe communities. These communities have enhanced their capacities in forest governance and community-based forestry management. Additionally, the project has established community-based structures in three AFCs, reviewed Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs) in multiple AFCs, and advanced seven applicant forest communities to steps 5 and 8 of the 9-step process for community forest establishment.	Activities in two of the forest communities, Konobo AFC and Glarro, have been delayed due to ongoing land and boundary disputes. In Glarro, the interim governance group (CFOC) has been inactive for the past nine months due to an unresolved standoff over forest resource issues.	Field Mission report/quarterly report.
<b>Outcome Indicator 1.1b: Number of regulatory framework documents updated/simplified and in used by forest communities' beneficiaries.</b> <b>Baseline 0,</b> <b>Target 3:</b>	This result has been achieved 133%. Under this indicator, four (4) regulatory frameworks documents on community forests management (Community Right Law, Conservation and Wildlife management Law, National Forest Reform Law and Land Right Act) were simplified to meet the reading level of the people at the community forests.	This result has been achieved 133%	Field Mission report/quarterly report.
<b>Outcome Indicator 2.1: Percentage increase in Biodiversity conserved in Protected Areas: Baseline: 0</b> <b>Target: 20%</b>	Percentage increased in Biodiversity conserved in Protected Areas has not yet been determined.	The result has not yet been determined due to missing data on the percentage increase in biodiversity conserved in Protected Areas. However, the project team is collaborating with the FDA to	Field Mission report/quarterly report.

<sup>6</sup> Note: Outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets should be **as outlined in the Project Document** so that you report on your **actual achievements against planned targets**. Add rows as required for Outcome 2, 3 etc.

		calculate the exact percentage increase in biodiversity using specific studies or reports that focus on regions or species within the project areas.	
<p><b>Outcome Indicator 3.1a: Number of climate-resilient livelihoods initiatives implemented in targeted forest communities</b>  <b>Baseline: 0</b>  <b>Target: 10:</b> at least 1 per forest community engaged.</p> <p><b>Outcome Indicator 3.1b: Number of people with increased income through sustainable alternative livelihood activities</b>  <b>Baseline:0</b>  <b>Target: at least 3000 people:</b></p>	<p>Achieved 60%: Six climate-smart agriculture activities(Cocoa/Plantain/Pigeon Pea, Lowland SRI Rice, Cassava Value Chain, Vegetables, and Beekeeping) are being implemented and are ongoing in 14 forest communities.</p> <p>50% Achieved: At least 1500 household heads have increased their incomes through different alternative livelihood initiatives, involving low land SRI rice farming, VSLA, Art and Craft, Bee Keeping, Vegetables, Cow peas.</p>	<p>There were delays in the implementation of additional livelihood activities. However, thirty (30) Community Based enterprises have been trained in different business models and expected to begin sustainable alternative livelihood activities in both the North-West and South-Eastern landscapes. Additionally, the project has established agriculture demonstration sites and will be involving livelihood activities in the project communities by Quarter 2 of 2025.</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report.</p> <p>Field Mission report/quarterly report.</p>
<p><b>Outcome Indicator 4.1.1:</b> Number of people or beneficiaries practicing sustainable forest management.  <b>Baseline 0:</b>  <b>Target</b> at least 60% of targeted beneficiaries in forest communities</p>	<p>More than 3000 beneficiaries are practicing sustainable forest management. During the period under review, SCNL, PADEV, SDI, FCI, TNC and CDA have been separately working with beneficiaries on sustainable forest management through community engagements, workshops, awareness sessions, training, sharing of flyers, posters, community radio shows, fact sheets, training materials, user-friendly multi-media outputs and contents among more than 6000 people in targeted forest communities), while also ensuring gender</p>	<p>The process is ongoing and is expected to benefit more people in 2025.</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report.</p>

	mainstreamed in community forest management.		
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Existing local governance institutions [CFMBs/ Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)] and Conservancy-based forums strengthened.</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.1.1a:</b> Number of Community Forest Management Body (CFMBs) with updated Community Forest Management (CFM) plans.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b>  <b>Planned Target: 3</b> Communities in each of the PA and PPA</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.1.2: Indicator 1.1.1b: Number of persons/participants who are aware/sensitized on Community Forest Management.</b></p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b>  <b>Planned Target:</b> At least 6,000 persons within the forest communities</p>	<p><b>44%</b> achieved, while <b>56% will be achieved based on the completion of the 9 steps.</b> However, 7 Forest communities are at steps 5 &amp; 8 currently.</p> <p>Two AFCs have strengthened their capacities on CFM reviewing their CFMP (Salayea awaiting approval from FDA to finalize the plan). One AFC has an active CFMP (konobo). <b>However, elections</b> were conducted for CFMBs in 2 AFCs (Salayea and Gbeapo, Sarbo, Putopo)</p> <p>Training conducted for Governance structures in 3 AFCs,</p> <p>Ongoing training for CFOCs in 7 CF and Revision of Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) carried out in 2 AFCs. 7 CF are now at Steps 5&amp;8 of the 9-step process. <b>The bylaws</b> and constitution of <b>Konobo AFC</b> have been revised and finalized. PADEV facilitated the development of the internal rules and terms of reference (ToRs) for leadership of the CFOC in <b>Kitiepo/River-Gbeh.</b></p> <p>This indicator will be achieved after the step 9 process is completed and communities are issued certificates of authorization.</p> <p>100% achieved! More than 6000 persons have been sensitized and are aware of Community Forest Management.</p>	<p>This result has not been achieved fully due to ongoing land and boundary disputes in Konobo AFC and Glarro. However, there are ongoing stakeholders consultations to resolve the conflict.</p> <p>The process is ongoing at the community-based forest level</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report.</p> <p>Field Mission report/quarterly report.</p>

<p><b>Output 1.2:</b> Community Forest Management Plans of existing authorized forest communities (AFC)/CFMBs are updated to reflect current reality.</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> Number of CFM plans updated for existing authorized communities' forests. <b>Baseline:0</b> <b>Planned Target:</b> 3 communities in each of the PA and PPA</p> <p><b>Indicator 1.2.2:</b> Number of plans, laws and policies amended to support community forest management, sustainable community forest businesses, and biodiversity conservation in forests. <b>Baseline:0</b> <b>Planned Target:</b> At least 2</p>	<p><b>30% Achieved:</b> Community Forests are going through nine steps. This indicator will be achieved during the development of CFOCs after the signing of the Community Forest Management Agreement at step 9 by FDA.</p> <p>A legal consultant hired to conduct legal analysis has received clearance for the report submitted on literature review and stakeholder consultations. The next step is to do the legal analysis to inform the decision for amendment.</p>	<p>There was delay in getting the consultants to implement this process.</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p> <p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>
<p><b>Output Indicator 1.1.3a:</b> Number of CBFM regulatory legal frameworks and policy instruments updated and submitted to the government for adoption. <b>Baseline:0</b> <b>Target: 3</b></p>	<p><b>100% achieved:</b> 4 regulatory frameworks documents simplified (Community Right Law, Conservation and Wildlife Mgt Law, National Forest Reform Law and Land Right Act by UNDP.</p>		<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>
<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Co-management of selected Protected Areas implemented through tripartite (Government, CBOs, and conservation NGOs) agreements and terms of partnerships.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2.1.1:</b> Number of PAs and PPAs co-managed by civil society, FDA, and communities through tripartite agreements under the CBFM project. <b>Baseline:0</b></p>	<p><b>100% Achieved:</b> A tripartite agreement/terms of partnership were entered into between UNDP and SCNL. This agreement enabled SCNL to train and deploy 80 local community Eco-guards (34 women and 46 men) to support FDA to address poaching in one National Park and one Proposed protected Area.</p> <p>FCI and SDI signed tripartite agreements to co-manage Konobo, Salayea, Sarbo, Potunpo, and Gbabo.</p>		<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>

<p><b>Target:</b> Local Eco-guard trained to manage 5 different locations of PAs, PPAs and around forest fringe communities.</p>	<p>FDA and communities, through tripartite agreements, trained and are working with Eco-guards and Rangers patrolling around Protected, Proposed Protected and Forest Fringe communities..</p>		
<p>FDA-Community reforestation by planting targeted hectares of indigenous trees in degraded forest landscapes in PAs.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> 500 Ha</p>	<p><b>Not yet Achieved:</b></p> <p>However, target site has been determined, a Letter of Agreement will be signed in first quarter of 2025 to upgrade tree nurseries and the vendor to supply relevant materials has been selected.</p>		<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>
<p><b>Output Indicator 2.1.3a:</b> Number of FDA communities using collaborative forest monitoring including remote sensing technologies and carbon monitoring tool to promote biodiversity and forest monitoring in Protected Areas.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> Capacity support to FDA/communities, including remote sensing technologies, carbon monitoring tool to promote biodiversity and forest monitoring.</p>	<p><b>100% Achieved in year one:</b> Under the period reviewed, UNDP provided FDA with 25 new brand motor bikes, GPS, tablets, rain gear, camaras, remote sensing technologies, carbon monitoring tools, etc. to promote biodiversity and forest monitoring in more than 30 forest communities. The motor bikes are used by Rangers and Park warden officers to patrol and enforce forestry laws.</p>	<p>FDA is patrolling the forests using the equipment provided by the project.</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>
<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Strengthened climate resilience and productivity for crop and livestock management.</p> <p><b>Output Indicator 3.1.1a:</b> Number of climate resilient livelihood initiatives introduced and owned by beneficiaries around PAs, PPAs or Forest Fringe Communities.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b>At least 10 climate resilient livelihood initiatives</p>	<p>Six(6) climate-smart agriculture activities(Cocoa/Plantain/Pigeon Pea, Lowland SRI Rice, Cassava Value Chain, Vegetables, and Beekeeping) are being implemented and ongoing in 14 forest communities.</p> <p>Determining a baseline was problematic, but incomes have increased based on the testimonies from beneficiaries (<i>see qualitative text</i>).</p>	<p>Quarter 2 of 2025 will witness increased in the number of climate-smart agriculture activities under community based-enterprises</p> <p>There were delays in productive climate resilient crops and livestock initiatives.However, the project will support at least 1 livelihood options per community and strengthen their capacities to become more climate-resilient through diversification,</p>	<p>Field Mission report/quarterly report</p>

<p><b>Indicator 3.1.1b:</b> Percentage increased in income of beneficiaries from productive climate resilient crops and livestock.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> At least 60% of Targeted Beneficiaries</p>		enterprise development, marketing and incoming generating modality in 2025.	
<p><b>Output 3.1.2:</b> Communities around PAs, PPAs and Forest Fringe livelihoods improved, sources of income diversified and enhanced.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.1.2:</b> Number of persons in targeted communities with improved livelihoods and diversified sources of income.</p> <p><b>Baseline:0</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> At least 3000 of targeted beneficiaries at CFs</p>	50%(1500) of targeted beneficiaries have improved their livelihoods and diversified sources of income through different alternative livelihood initiatives, involving low land SRI rice farming, VSLA, Art and Craft, livestock and small ruminants, Bee Keeping, Vegetables, Cow peas, etc.	There were delays in diversifying sources of incomes through different alternative livelihood initiatives due to remoteness and hard-to reach nature of communities and bureaucratic procurement processes during the implementation. However, we expect the number to increase in year 2025 and 2026	Field Mission report/quarterly report
<p><b>Output 3.1.3:</b> Increased value chain-specific assessment (VCA) based post-harvest services.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.1.3:</b> Number of value chain-specific assessment-based post-harvest services being successfully undertaken in target forest communities.</p> <p><b>Baseline 0:</b></p> <p><b>Target:</b> At least 1 per forest community</p>	0% achieved: on these results, however, activities geared towards achieving these results are ongoing and expected to register benefit in 2025-2026.	There were delays in procurement processes leading to haring of consultants.	Field Mission report/quarterly report
<p><b>Output 3.14:</b> Market and finance access enhanced around PAs, PPAs and Forest Fringe Communities.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3.1.4:</b> Number of agriculture and forest-based enterprises having access to business training and grant through the growth accelerator.</p>	<b>10% achieved:</b> however, 30 community-based enterprises were selected and are prepared to receive small grants in quarter one of 2025 to boost their businesses.	The successful enterprises did not have documents so guiding them to the acceptable levels took more time than earlier anticipated.	Field Mission report/quarterly report

<b>Baseline 0:</b> <b>Target:</b> 30 Comm- Based Enterprises			
<b>Output 4.1.1:</b> Enhanced generation of lessons learned best practices and knowledge management (KM) products  <b>Indicator 4.1.1a:</b> Number of knowledge management product generated and shared in forest communities Baseline: 0 Target: At least 3000 knowledge management products generated and shared in all targeted communities.  <b>Indicator 4.1.1b:</b> Number of persons reached with awareness and education messages, accessing user-friendly multi-media outputs and contents in targeted forest communities. <b>Baseline 0:</b> <b>Target:</b> 6000 people	100% Achieved: SCNL, CDA, FCI, SDI, TNC, FDA, PADEV produced 6000 user-friendly knowledge management products/illustrative materials to strengthen the capacity of governance groups and local stakeholders at forest communities' level.  More than 10,000 people have been reached multi-media outputs and contents in targeted forest communities.		Field Mission report/quarterly report
<b>Indicator 4.1.3a:</b> A gender-mainstreamed participatory MEL strategy developed/Evidence of references made to the gender-based strategies in decision making. <b>Baseline 0:</b> <b>Target: 1</b>	<b>100% of this result achieved.</b> A gender-mainstreamed participatory MEL strategy was developed and in used and a gender-mainstreamed assessment conducted within PAs, PPAs or Forest Fringe Communities of the CBFM project.		Field Mission report/quarterly report

## A Specific Story

### **A New Beginning for Cecelia Taryee, a Single Mother and Her Children Living Around an Authorized Forest Community in Liberia: Empowerment through Village Savings and Loan Associations**

In a small village near one of Liberia's Authorized Forest Communities (AFCs), Cecelia, a determined single mother, faced daily challenges in providing basic needs for her five children. Living around the Konobo, Authorized Forest Community (AFC), her life took a drastic turn when her children's father left for a mining site in Grand Kru County in 2022, leaving her to raise their children alone.

Cecelia's reliance on the forest for firewood, food, and income-generating activities was the foundation of her household's survival. However, the pressure of depending on diminishing forest resources began to take its toll, causing Cecelia to struggle with poverty and instability.

Everything changed when the Community-Based Forestry and Protected Area (CBFM) project introduced the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to the community. These associations were designed to empower women, offering them financial literacy, a platform to pool savings, access small loans, and invest in income-generating activities that have minimal impact on the forest. The first VSLA groups were formed in communities such as Sarbo, Gbeapo & Putipo (River Gee), Konobo (Grand Gedeh), Weasayn (Rivercess), and later expanded to Suah (Sinoe) community forests.

Cecelia was one of the first to join a "Varglor VSLA Group". With a small loan, she began a business selling dried fish and local crafts. Her business has flourished, and she is now able to put food on the table for her children. This new venture brought her a steady income, relieving her from the dependence on the forest for survival. As Cecelia's business thrived, her life began to improve in meaningful ways. She is now able to buy better clothes for her children, pay their school fees, and provide them with healthier, more nutritious meals.

In addition to the financial benefits, the VSLA helped create a strong network of support among the women in the forest communities. They shared advice, encouraged one another, and celebrated each other's successes. Cecelia, once struggling to make ends meet, now saw herself as part of a vibrant, empowered group of women who were all working toward a better future.

Cecelia's success became an inspiration for others. She not only continued to grow her business but also became a leader and Treasurer of the Varglor VSLA Group, advocating for women's empowerment in the community. Her confidence grew, and with it, her sense of hope for the future. The VSLA, alongside the broader initiatives of the CBFM project, provided Cecelia with financial independence and the tools to change the future for herself and her children.

Today, Cecelia's life is drastically different. She has a steady income, her children are now going to school, and she feels empowered to shape her family's destiny. Through the VSLAs, Cecelia and her community of single mothers have transformed their lives. What once seemed impossible, economic independence and a brighter future has become their new reality.



Cecelia and the VSLA Group Members



### III. CBFM PROJECT CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED -2024

#### Challenges

#### Delays in Implementation, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices

The project has faced some challenges that have caused delays in implementation. However, these challenges have provided valuable insights and allowed the project to adapt and refine its strategies. Below are the main challenges, the actions taken to mitigate them, and the lessons learned:

#### 1. Boundary Conflicts in Glarro Community

- **Challenge:**

One of the key challenges encountered during implementation was long standing **boundary conflicts** among communities sharing common borders, particularly in the **Glarro community**. These conflicts led to safety concerns that prevented implementing partners and the Forest Development Authority (FDA) staff from accessing the community to carry out project activities.

#### **Actions Taken:**

The UNDP and UNFAO have raised the issue to the local leadership and FDA, who are working collaboratively to resolve tensions and allow the implementation of activities to proceed.

#### 2. Remoteness of Intervention Areas

- **Challenge:**

The **remoteness** of the project's intervention areas, especially in rural communities in Liberia, posed significant implementation challenges. Poor road infrastructure and limited network connectivity in forest communities made it difficult for project teams to carry out their activities effectively. The lack of access to information and communication also added to the difficulty of reaching these communities.

#### **Actions Taken:**

To overcome these challenges, the project focused on working closely with the implementing partners at the community level and community-based organizations (CBOs) who are familiar with the local context, including alternative transportation routes and methods for disseminating information. In addition, community

leaders and travelers are used as conduits to communicate project updates and information to communities in hard-to-reach areas.

### 3. Delays in Receiving the 4th Tranche of Funds

- **Challenge:**

A significant delay occurred when the project did not receive the 4th tranche of funds on time. This delay was primarily due to the life cycle of the fund disbursement processes, which slowed down the project's activities and created a gap in implementation.

**Actions Taken:**

To mitigate the impact of this delay, the project team prioritized activities that could continue with existing funds while awaiting the next tranche. Planning for contingency activities during financial delays became a standard practice to ensure that progress was not stalled completely.

### 4. Delays in Liquidating- Reviewing Financial Reports from CSOs

- **Challenge:**

The process of reviewing financial reports from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) took longer than expected, resulting in a one-month delay before the second tranche could be disbursed to the implementing partners.

**Actions Taken:**

UNDP is committed to providing financial and procurement training to IPs to ensure that future financial report reviews are done more efficiently. Clear timelines and protocols were established to speed up the process of review and disbursement.

**Lessons Learned:**

The delay in financial disbursements emphasized the need for improved financial management and reporting systems. Regular training and capacity building for finance teams are essential to ensure smooth and timely processing of funds. Furthermore, a streamlined approval process for financial reports is necessary to avoid delays in the future.

### 5. Drought Impacting SRI Rice Sites

- **Challenge:**

During the beginning of **Quarter 3**, the **SRI rice sites** were affected by a **drought**. The rains had not intensified as expected in the target areas, which impacted the growth of the rice crops.

**Actions Taken:**

The project team continue to closely monitor the situation and work to provide an adaptive support to the farmers by suggesting irrigation solutions to improve water access for the crops.

**Lessons Learned:**

The drought highlighted the vulnerability of agricultural projects to climate variability. It emphasized the importance of **climate-smart agricultural practices** and the need for communities to be equipped with knowledge and resources to adapt to changing weather patterns. The experience reinforced the need for **risk**



**assessments** and **contingency planning** when designing and implementing climate-sensitive agricultural initiatives.

#### IV. Other Assessments or Evaluations

- A consultant was hired to develop sustainable production standards and criteria for selected value chains (beekeeping, vegetables, small ruminants, poultry, cassava, and cocoa) has submitted his report including draft manuals for the selected value chains.
- The mid-term review consultant was recruited by the end of the reporting period and the report will be ready at the beginning of quarter two.

#### Some Photos:

*Figure 1: Weasean Forest Governance team pose with Community Forest Map*



*Communities collecting cocoa seedlings*



*Rice harvest*